

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A fat based confectionery product formed of at least one elongated strand of extrudate of fat based confectionery material comprising:

~~wherein~~ the at least one strand of extrudate is capable of being physically handled while exhibiting a temporary flexibility,

~~characterized in that~~ the strand of extrudate is formed to a surface area-to-mass ratio that is ~~higher~~ greater than 8.0 cm^2 per gram unit with the at least one strand having a continuous total length that is ~~higher~~ greater than 80 mm, and

the at least one strand has a curled configuration forming a continuous strand of a plurality of curls which is randomly coiled on a receiving surface without the strand breaking.

Claim 2 (currently amended) The fat based confectionery product of claim 1, wherein the at least one strand of the extrudate has a surface area-to-mass ratio that is ~~higher~~ greater than 10.0 cm^2 per gram unit.

Claim 3 (currently amended) The fat based confectionery product of claim 1 ~~or~~ 2, wherein the extrudate is formed by extruding of a solid mass of a fat confectionery material which is pressed under pressure through a die and at a temperature of less than 30°C .

Claim 4 (currently amended) The fat based confectionery product of claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein it has a volume occupancy of more than $2.5 \text{ cm}^3/\text{g}$.

Claim 5 (currently amended) The fat based confectionery product of claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein the strand of extrudate retains its temporary flexibility for at least ~~during~~ 3 minutes after extrusion.

Claim 6 (currently amended) The fat based confectionery product of claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein the fat-based confectionery material is selected from the group consisting of dark, milk ~~or~~ and white chocolate, compound or couverture.

Claim 7 (original) The fat based confectionery product of claim 6, wherein the fat-based confectionery material contains between 3 and 8% by weight milk fat and a total fat content between 26 and 40% by weight.

Claim 8 (currently amended) The fat based confectionery product of claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein the cross-sectional shape of the extrudate is of a shape selected from the group consisting of a circle, a star, a triangle, a rectangle, a rounded rectangle, a polygon ~~or~~ and a non-symmetrical shape.

Claim 9 (currently amended) The fat based confectionery product of claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein the at least one strand has a length greater than 100 mm.

Claim 10 (currently amended) The fat based confectionery product of claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein the at least one strand has a length greater than 500 mm.

Claim 11 (currently amended) The fat based confectionery product of claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims, wherein it comprises~~ comprising several strands of extrudate obtained by parallel extrusion and forming an extruded product of intermeshed and curled configuration of strands.

Claim 12 (currently amended) A food product comprising ~~made of the association of a fat base confectionery product according to any of claims 1 to 11~~ formed of at least one elongated strand of extrudate of fat based confectionery material comprising the at least one strand of extrudate is capable of being physically handled while exhibiting a temporary flexibility, the strand of extrudate is formed to a surface area-to-mass ratio that is greater than 8.0 cm² per gram unit with the at least one strand having a continuous total length that is greater than 80 mm, and the at least one strand has a curled configuration forming a continuous strand of a

plurality of curls which is randomly coiled on a receiving surface without the strand breaking
and at least one other edible item for receiving the fat based confectionery.

Claim 13 (currently amended) A food product according to claim 12 wherein the edible item is selected from the group consisting of ice cream, pastry, solid confectionery product ~~or~~ and combinations thereof.

Claim 14 (currently amended) A food product according to claim 12 ~~or 13~~, wherein the edible item serves as a support for receiving the fat based confectionery product.

Claim 15 (currently amended) Method for conveniently delivering a ~~decorating, easy-to-handle~~ confectionery product ~~of enhanced~~ having melt-in-the mouth properties, at a foodservice outlet, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ comprising the steps of: forming of at least one ductile elongated strand of extrudate of fat based confectionery material which is capable of retaining its extruded cross-sectional shape and has at least a temporary flexibility; by extruding a mass of fat based confectionery material and depositing the at least one strand of extrudate in a curled configuration with the at least one strand having a continuous total length of multiple curls that is ~~higher~~ greater than 80 mm without the strand breaking; and wherein the strand is extruded through a die to form at least one strand of surface area-to-mass ratio that is ~~higher~~ greater than 8.0 cm² per gram unit.

Claim 16 (currently amended) Method according to claim 15, wherein forming the at least one elongated strand of extrudate comprises

providing a solid fat based confectionery mass,

submitting the solid fat based confectionery mass to a pressure in an extruder at a temperature of less than 30°C,

passing the solid fat based confectionery mass through a die of predetermined cross section to make at least one strand of product, and

~~optionally, cutting the strand at the desired total length and,~~

receiving the at least one strand in a serving container or onto a food item.

Claim 17 (currently amended) Method according to claim 15 ~~or 16, wherein it further comprises~~ comprising serving the at least one strand while still exhibiting its temporary flexibility.

Claim 18 (currently amended) Method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 15 or 16, wherein

the solid fat based confectionery mass is provided in a metered amount and is deposited in a barrel of the extruder, then, pressure is exerted in the extruder by action of a piston or a screw pushing the mass in the barrel through the die.

Claim 19 (original) Method according to claim 15, wherein

the at least one strand of extrudate is received on a sliding ramp that gently directs the at least one elongated strand of extrudate to the serving area.

Claim 20 (currently amended) Apparatus for on demand dispensing of a ~~decorating, easy to handle~~ fat based confectionery product comprising:

barrel means for receiving a predetermined amount of fat based confectionery material,

a pressure engaging means for engaging under pressure the fat based confectionery material contained in the barrel means,

~~characterized in that~~

~~it further comprises~~ die means arranged for producing at least one elongated strand of the fat based confectionery product to an area-to-mass ratio that is ~~higher~~ greater than 8.0 cm² per gram unit, and

control means for actuating the pressure engaging means with the barrel means upon the push of a button and for extruding the at least one strand of the fat based confectionery.

Claim 21 (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 20, ~~wherein it further~~
~~comprises comprising~~:

at least one hopper to store the fat based confectionery material,

dosing means to dose the fat based confectionery material from the hopper and,

chute means to collect the dosed fat based material and funnel it into the barrel means.

Claim 22 (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 20, wherein, upon the
a push of a button, the control means is configured for controlling the actuation of the dosing
means to dose a fat based material from the hopper before actuating the pressure engaging means
with the barrel means and extruding the at least one strand of the fat based confectionery.

Claim 23 (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 21 ~~or 22, wherein it~~
~~comprises comprising~~ a plurality of hoppers for storing a range of fat based confectionery
material.

Claim 24 (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 22, wherein, upon the
a push of a button, the control means is configured for selectively controlling the actuation of the
dosing means to dose the selected fat based confectionery material from said hoppers before
actuating the pressure engaging means with the barrel means upon and extruding the at least one
strand of the fat based confectionery.

Claim 25 (currently amended) Apparatus according to ~~any ones of claims~~ claim 21
~~to 24~~, wherein each dosing means is an auger.

Claim 26 (currently amended) Apparatus according to ~~any ones of claims~~ claim 20
~~to 25~~, wherein the die comprises at least one outlet having a perimeter length comprised between
1.6 and 200 mm.

Claim 27 (original) Apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the die comprises at
least one outlet having a perimeter length comprised between 3.0 and 25 mm.

Claim 28 (currently amended) Apparatus according to ~~any ones of claims~~ claim 20
~~to 27~~, wherein

the die comprises an outlet of diameter of less than 3.5 mm to form a rod of extrudate.

Claim 29 (currently amended) Apparatus according to ~~any ones of claims~~ claim 20
~~to 28~~, wherein

the die comprises an outlet of slot shape of height less than 1.2 mm and width more than 5.0 mm to produce a ribbon of extrudate.

Claim 30 (original) Apparatus according to claim 29, wherein

the die comprises an outlet of slot shape of height less than 1.0 mm and width more than 6.0 mm to produce a ribbon of extrudate.

Claim 31 (currently amended) Apparatus according to ~~any ones of claims~~ claim 20
~~to 30~~, wherein

the die comprises multiple outlets of individual cross-sections, the outlets being separated from at least 1 mm from each other to extrude discrete strands of extrudate.

Claim 32 (new) Method according to claim 16 comprising the step of cutting the strand at a desired total length.